

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Code</i>
	SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	BEDH

HOLLISTON

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statues of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The School Committee desires citizens of the district to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public.

In order that all citizens who wish to be heard before the Committee have a chance and to insure the ability of the Committee to conduct the district's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

1. At each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals or group representatives will be invited to address the Committee, speaking from the area designated as "audience seating", during the Public Comment portion of the agenda. The Chairperson shall determine the time and length of the public participation segment.
2. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. The Chairperson may permit extension of this time limit.
3. Topics of discussion must be limited to those items listed on the School Committee meeting agenda for that evening, except for a brief period to be established by the Chairperson for non-agenda items.
4. Improper conduct and remarks will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. If a speaker persists in improper conduct or remarks, the Chairperson may terminate that individual's privilege of address.
5. All remarks from the public or School Committee members will be addressed through the Chairperson of the meeting. Any presentation to the School Committee which breaches the privacy or other rights of students, parents, or school employees, or which does not comply with School Committee policy on complaints will be ruled out of order. Comments made by an individual member of the School Committee do not represent the Committee as a whole and are therefore personal in nature.
6. Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of the school operations and programs as concern them, but in public session, the Committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any member of the school community. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members.
7. Comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the Committee in written format before or after the meeting for the Committee members review and consideration at an appropriate time.

First Reading:	November 13, 1997
Second Reading:	December 4, 1997
Third Reading:	December 18, 1997
Policy Adopted:	December 18, 1997
Policy Amended:	December 21, 2000
Legal References:	M.G.L. 39:23A; 39:23B
Policy Cross Reference:	BE (School Committee Meeting) ; BEDA (School Committee Meeting Notification) ; BEDB (School Committee Meeting Agenda Format)
Procedure Reference:	